



**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the United Nations**

135 East 36<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10016

Tel: (212) 685-2003 . Fax: (212) 685- 1561 . E-mail: [namibia@un.int](mailto:namibia@un.int)

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE**

**AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

**BEFORE**

**THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE  
73<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON**

**AGENDA ITEM 70: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION  
OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN**

**9 OCTOBER 2018**

**NEW YORK**  
*(Check Against Delivery)*

**Mr. Chairperson**

Namibia associates itself with the statements delivered by Morocco on behalf of the African Group and Zimbabwe on behalf of SADC.

**Mr. Chairperson**

Namibia has always been, and will remain a firm supporter of the Rights of Children. As the song says, “children are our future”; we stake their future on the implementation of development policies, including the Sustainable Development Goals, to guarantee their full potential.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

The Child Care and Protection Act of Namibia conforms to regional and international agreements. The Act provides a comprehensive legal framework including specifying legal mandates to prevent and respond to neglect, abuse, exploitation and the trafficking of children.

However, we recognise that children in Namibia across the economic spectrum face challenges including bullying. These are particularly harsh on children from marginalised groups, such as children with HIV and AIDS, children living with disabilities, children from poor families and children from marginalised groups. The very fact that we are discussing this issue at the United Nations demonstrates the extent of the problem bullying in our society today.

The report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against children takes note of steps being taken by Namibia to develop policy, planning and budgeting, as well as the fact that we are in the process of enacting legislation to protect children from violence. In September 2018, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture launched the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF), a comprehensive document that provides a vision and guiding principles for building safe and supportive school communities, centered on the wellbeing of learners and educators. This is one way in which children are supported through the creation of safe, conducive learning environments.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

Reports state that women constitute over half the world's illiterate adults; a reflection of gender discrimination and a factor in reproducing female poverty. Equal access to education is fundamental to tackling female poverty. Namibia has introduced free education from primary level through secondary level to empower the girl child and in order to ultimately put an end to the cycle of female poverty in our country.

Whilst Namibia has a robust legislative framework on education, characterised by progressive policies and plans and the largest share of the national budget, challenges persist. These include: a shortage of well-trained and passionate teachers, especially in remote rural schools; limited teaching and learning materials and playground equipment; overcrowded classrooms; and limited access to water and sanitation services, electricity, and technology, including internet connections.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

In Namibia, not only do we face what can be called an epidemic of teenage pregnancies, but over one in five new HIV infections occur among young adolescents, with young adolescent girls accounting for two-thirds of those infections.

Adolescents living with HIV and AIDS suffer societal effects and undergo physical and social experiences such as loss and bereavement, difficulties in disclosure, treatment adherence, youth identity, stigma, and coping with their status.

It is important that governments support programmes of prevention, as well as programmes for young adolescents living with or affected by HIV and AIDS. In Namibia the formation of formal support systems such as Teen Clubs provide a safe platform for children living with HIV and AIDS to cope with the social and medical dynamics of their condition. Teen Clubs allow for safe and unique interaction towards addressing their needs. The Secretary General's report notes that by the end of 2017 these teen centers have reached over 1,000 adolescents living with HIV to provide treatment adherence support and psychosocial services.

And in her capacity as UNAIDS Special Advocate for Young Women and Adolescent Girls, Namibia's First Lady Madame Monica Geingos, has also provided an important platform to Namibia's youth to openly and meaningfully discuss issues that affect them, including on sexual and reproductive health.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

We urge all member states to stand together to ensure that children's rights are protected and sufficiently promoted through adequate, flexible and implemented legislative frameworks for the sake of the needs of our children.

**I thank you.**